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THE TEXT OF JEREMIAH.

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It has long been known that the Septuagint version of Jeremiah differs remarkably from the Massoretic text. Probably the case is not quite so desperate as that of Ezekiel; for the current Hebrew is generally readable. But the fact of the variation is still remarkable and one that deserves investigation. Recent commentators have been content to pronounce in favor of the MT., and to use the LXX. occasionally "as at the most a secondary or tertiary source for the restoration of the text" (*von Orelli*, p. 217). A systematic study of the text critical questions, however, is still needed, such as Professor Cornill has given us in his edition of Ezekiel. The same author promises to edit Isaiah and Jeremiah; and for a decisive answer to the questions raised we may have to wait for these monographs. Meanwhile, however, it is well that the attention of others be directed to the problem. The following notes are intended to state some of the facts that must be taken into consideration.

In the notoriously confused condition of the LXX. text itself, the first point is, What shall we use as the best representative of this text? A provisional answer to this question may be given by means of Origen's Hexapla. Although this work as a whole has perished, fragments enough have come down to us to be of very great use. Especially with regard to the diacritical points we are in a favorable condition. In the Book of Jeremiah several MSS. are extant in Greek (besides the Syriac Hexapla) which testify to these diacritical points. These points distinguish the plus and minus of the LXX. That is to say: it was Origen's intention to mark with an asterisk everything not found in his LXX. which he inserted from the Hebrew (or from Theodotion's version), and to mark with an obelos everything in his LXX. which is not in the Hebrew. Evidently, if we find a MS. which *omits* whatever the hexaplar MSS. give with an asterisk, and at the same time *contains* what these mark by an obelos, we may safely claim that

we have Origen's text before us. The MS. which most nearly approximates this may be taken as the best one for our purpose until we get the really critical edition for which we have been waiting so long. Very little study will show us that the Vatican MS. (and the Roman edition based upon it) more nearly than any other now accessible fulfills these conditions. The following figures are fairly correct, I think; absolute accuracy is difficult to attain. In making them up I have counted every instance of the omission or insertion of a particle which would affect by a single letter the Hebrew text (as *καί* = *ו*).

Asterisks are expressly testified in 739 instances in the Book of Jeremiah. The words so marked are omitted from Tischendorf's text in all but fifty cases. On the other hand, Tischendorf omits one or more words in 357 cases in which the asterisk seems not to be certified. As these last are in large proportion particles or small words, we might easily suppose the scribes not to have thought them worth designating in copying. More difficult is the case of the *plus* of the LXX. The obelos occurs in seventy-four instances, of which all but twelve correspond with our Greek text. But, in addition, our Greek text inserts a word or more in no less than 245 cases. Whatever else we may conclude from these figures, we can hardly suppose (for Jeremiah at any rate), as Cornill does, that the Vaticanus is a copy made from the Hexapla with the intention of restoring the genuine LXX. under the guidance of the diacritical marks (cf. Cornill, p. 84). The value of our edition for the comparison in hand, however, will be quite as great, because, by its greater variation from the MT. it shows itself even nearer the original LXX. than any text we can now command. For a brief consideration of the variants in Holmes and Parsons' edition shows that they have almost always arisen from hexaplar intermixture.

Taking Tischendorf's text, then, as on the whole a satisfactory representative of the Greek version, how does it differ from the received Hebrew? The answer is well known—it is considerably shorter. How now shall we account for this difference? The accepted answer is "by the careless and arbitrary manner in which the translators dealt with their text, leaving out words which they did not understand or which seemed to them superfluous." But while this is the current answer, another is, to say the least, conceivable—we may suppose that the *plus* of the MT. is in large part the insertion of scribes.

As between the two answers, it will readily be confessed that the probabilities, as judged by the ordinary observation of the laws of transmission, are on the side of the latter. A text is more likely to grow in the process of transmission than to shrink. The rhetorical expansion of an obscure phrase is more likely than its omission. The insertion of synonyms is more likely than their omission. The influence of parallel passages tends to swell the shorter form. The *a priori* probability then is in favor of the shorter text—in this case in favor of the LXX. The argument from age is in the same direction. The LXX. represents a He-

brew text considerably earlier than the time to which we can trace the type perpetuated in the MT. But, after all, these arguments only create a presumption. The presumption is strengthened by the ordinary conduct of the Greek translators, and, indeed, as the figures given above will show, even in the Book of Jeremiah they have often inserted words *as well as omitted* them, if the variations are to be referred to them at all, and this would be inexplicable. That is to say, while we might explain the omissions on the ground of a desire to be as concise as possible, we could not, in consistency with this, account for the insertions at all.

It may be said, indeed, that the argument will apply equally well to the MT. If its *plus* is the result of insertions, then we are at a loss to account for its *minus*. But this is only an apparent difficulty. The general rule is that the shorter text is original. Both LXX. and MT. have suffered from the tendency of scribes (continued through a long series of hands it must be remembered), a tendency to expand their text. Only they have not been affected uniformly, and the MT. has suffered more than the other. If this natural explanation be the correct one, an examination of the variations ought to show it. It is scarcely possible that the omission of some thousands of words from a book the size of Jeremiah should leave no traces in the resulting text.

The phrase **נאם יהוה** occurs in the Hebrew of Jeremiah 168 times, if we may trust the concordance. In 46 of these it is lacking in the LXX. It needs no reflection to see that the phrase, from the very fact of its occurring so often, would easily be inserted in new passages. If the phrase were original in all cases, we should expect it to be omitted where the omission would least disturb the sense. In such cases as the following: "Therefore behold the days come, *saith Yahweh*, that it shall no more be said" (vii. 32), "At that time, *saith Yahweh*, they shall bring forth" (viii. 1), "For these should I not visit, *saith Yahweh*, or upon such a nation" (ix. 8), "And it shall be if ye hearken to me, *saith Yahweh*, not to carry a burden" (xvii. 24),—in these cases the LXX. testifies to the reading, while the cases of apparent omission are many of them where the phrase occurs at the end of a verse.¹

The cases of the divine name may be grouped together. The combination **יהוה אדוני** (or **יהוה צבאות**) is found ten times in the Hebrew text. In only three of these it is witnessed by the LXX. In two of these, which are cases of direct personal address (i. 6; iv. 10) we find *δέσποτα κύριε*, in the other we have *κυρίῳ Θεῷ* (L. 25). It is probable that the first two are the only original instances. If the **אדוני** was omitted or *Θεός* substituted for it eight times, why not in the other two? That a Jewish editor, however, should *insert* **אדוני** cannot be considered

¹ It is probable that the discrepancy was originally larger than is indicated above. The great majority of cases in which the phrase remains in the Greek render it *λέγει κύριος*. Those MSS. which have inserted it later generally render *φησὶ κύριος*. But *φησὶ κύριος* occurs in a few instances in the Roman text. It is natural to suspect that they also are not original.

surprising. The phrase **יהוה אמר כה** occurs over a hundred times in the MT., while in thirty-two instances we find **כה אמר יהוה צבאות**; once we have **כה אמר יהוה אלהי צבאות**; thirteen times **יהוה צבאות**; **כה אמר יהוה אלהי צבאות**; three times **יהוה צבאות**; **אלהי ישראל**; thirteen times **יהוה צבאות**. In contrast with this confused condition of things we find that the LXX. reads *κύριος* except in the following: xv. 16; xxii. 27; xxxii. 14, and xliv. 7, in which we find *κύριος παντοκράτωρ* (which is elsewhere the translation of **יהוה צבאות**) and six other cases where we have *κύριος ὁ Θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ*. According to this, Jeremiah used *Yahweh of Hosts* or *Yahweh God of Israel* only rarely, and, as we may suppose, when he wished to be emphatic, and he never strung together *Yahweh God of Hosts God of Israel*, or like long drawn out titles. This usage is consistent and tells in favor of the LXX., while it is only too easy for a copyist to multiply titles under the impression that he is adding to the solemnity of the address.¹ Outside the phrase **יהוה אמר כה** the MT. has in one instance **יהוה צבאות**, in one it has **יהוה צבאות** and in fourteen **יהוה צבאות**. In all these cases² but six, the LXX. has simply *κύριος*, and in these six (three of them are in chapters L. and LI.) it reads *κύριος παντοκράτωρ*. The LXX. is thus consistent with itself.

We may next group together explicative words and phrases. In thirty-five cases **כל** of the Hebrew has no equivalent in the Greek,—one of the easiest words to insert; **לאמר** is omitted eight times; **הנביא** after a proper name (usually that of Jeremiah) is omitted twenty-four times, **מלך יהודה** twice, **מלך יהודה** four times; **נבוכדראצא** before **מלך בבל** seven times. The omission of **בבלה** (three times), **כה אמר יהוה** (three) and **השכם ודבר** are precisely similar. In all of them the insertion by a scribe is almost to be expected, and the shorter form is original. Notice the following like examples, where the brackets indicate the omission by the LXX.: xiii. 7, “And I took the girdle from the place where I had hidden it, and behold [the girdle] was spoiled.” The omission of the subject is characteristic of the Hebrew. xix. 9, “In the siege and in the straitness with which their enemies [and those seeking their life] shall straiten them.” xx. 5, “And I will give all the treasure of this city and all its property [and all its precious things], and all the treasures of the kings of Judah [will I give] into the hand of their enemies [and they shall plunder them and take them], and they shall bring them to Babylon.” xxv. 9, “Behold, I will send and take [all] the

¹ One passage (xxxiii. 12) reads *κύριος δυναμέων* in our present Greek text. The second word, however, is omitted by a considerable number of MSS., and is on the face of it suspicious, because we find elsewhere *παντοκράτωρ*. For the sake of completeness it may be added that **נאם אדוני יהוה צב** is found twice, and **נאם יהוה צב** twice; in three of these the LXX. has simply *κύριος*, once it reads *κύριος ὁ Θεὸς σου*, apparently borrowing from the first half of the same verse (ii. 19).

² It is possible that I have overlooked some, as the concordances are not very reliable on such frequently recurring phrases.

families of the north [saith Yahweh and unto Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, my servant], and will bring them upon this land." In all these instances the shorter reading makes perfectly good sense.

To enforce this point I will now give a few examples in the Hebrew form witnessed by the LXX., and then give separately the additional matter of the MT. If this additional matter really belongs to the text, the fact will easily be discovered.

i. 18.—והנה נתתיך היום לעיר מבצר ולחומות נחשת למלכי יהודה—
לשריה ולעם הארץ:

MT. inserts לכהניה and על-כל הארץ, ולעמוד ברזל, אני.

vii. 17.—. האיןך ראה מה המה עשים בחוצות ירושלם: MT. inserts
בערי יהודה.

vii. 26.—. הרעו ויקשו את-ערפם מאבותם— inserted.

xi. 4.—. אותם כ inserted, שמעו בקולי ועשיתם כל אשר אצוה—.

xii. 3.—. תראני inserted, ואתה יהוה ידעתי ובחנת לבי אתך—.

xiii. 4.—. אשר קנית inserted, קח את האזור אשר על מתנך—.

xiii. 17.—. ודמע תדמע—added תבכה נפשי מפני גוה ותרד עיני דמעה—.

xviii. 4.—. כחמר and MT. inserts ונשחת הכלי אשר הוא עשה בידו—
changes ביד היוצר into בידו.

xix. 5.—. לשרף את בניהם באש אשר לא צויתי ולא עלתה על לבי—.
MT. inserts ולא דברתי and עלות לבעל.

xxi. 4.—. כה אמר יהוה הנני מסב את כלי המלחמה אשר אתם—
נלחמים בם את-הכשרים הצרים עליכם מחוץ לחומה אל תוך העיר
הזאת:

The insertions are and את-מלך בבל ו, אשר בידכם, אלהי ישראל.
ואספתי אותם.

xxii. 25.—. ונתתיך ביד מבקשי נפשך אשר אתה יגור מפניהם;
וביד נבוכדראצר מלך בבל וביד and ביד, הכשרים insertions.

Cf. further the following:

vi. 16, 17, "Thus saith Yahweh:

Call to the mourning women that they may come,
And to the cunning women send that they may hasten,
And let them take up for us a lamentation."

The structure, which is here quite regular, is disturbed by the Massoretic insertions. xxv. 3, 4, "From the thirteenth year of Josiah, son of Amon, king of Judah, and to this day, three and twenty years I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and I have sent to you my servants the prophets, rising early and sending, and you have not heard and have not inclined your ear." Eight words

are inserted by the MT. xxv. 33, "And the slain of Yahweh in that day [LXX., in the day of Yahweh] shall be from the end of the earth to the end of the earth, and shall not be buried; for dung on the face of the ground they shall be." MT. inserts "they shall not be mourned and shall not be gathered." xli. 1-3, "And in the seventh month came Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and ten men with him, unto Gedaliah to Mizpah, and they ate bread there together. And Ishmael and the ten men with him arose and smote Gedaliah whom the king of Babylon had appointed in the land, and all the Jews which were with him in Mizpah, and the Chaldees which were found there." For the more than twenty words inserted by the MT. I will refer to the original. The sense is entirely clear without them.

While the insertions in the above passages are in general easily accounted for, there are some plain instances of duplication, as ix. 4, **הנני מאכילם את-**, **הנני ואכלהו ויכלהו** [העם הזה] לענה, where the clause in brackets really duplicates the suffix immediately preceding. In this way arose apparently the reading **ואכלהו ויכלהו** in x. 25. In xi. 13, we read "And as the number of the streets of Jerusalem ye have placed *altars to Bosheth, altars to sacrifice to Baal*;" LXX. has simply *βωμὸς θυμῶν τῇ Βάαλ*. The substitution of Bosheth for Baal is known from other parts of the Old Testament. Here the two readings are combined in the Hebrew, but not yet in the Greek. Another example is in the passage already quoted (xli. 3), where MT. reads, "And all the Jews which were with him *with Gedaliah*." Cf. also li. 56, **כי בא עליה על בבל שורר**.

Heretofore we have considered the *plus* of the MT. Let us look at some of the *alternate readings*. After Jeremiah is shown a **סיר נפוח** he adds (i. 14) "And Yahweh said to me: From the North evil is *opened* (**תפתח**) upon all the inhabitants of the land." The LXX. reads apparently **תנפח**, preserving the paronomasia. In iii. 22 the Hebrew has **ארפה משובתיכם**; for the second word we find *τὰ συντρίμματα ἡμῶν* which of course represents **משברותיכם**. xv. 14 now reads, "And I will make thine enemies to pass over into a land thou knowest not." For **והעברתי** LXX. reads **והעברתיך**—"And I will make thee to serve thine enemies in a land thou knowest not," evidently more in accord with the context, confirmed also by the Targum which has **ותשתעבדון**. "And ye shall serve there other gods which shall not show you mercy" (so LXX. in xvi. 3); MT. has the difficult phrase **אשר לא אתן לכם חנינה**. A well known case is xxiii. 33, "And when this people or prophet or priest shall ask thee saying, What is the burden of Yahweh? then thou shalt say to them *Ye are the burden*"—**אתם המשא** for which in the MT. we find the incomprehensible **את-מה-משא**. xli. 9, "And the pit into which Ishmael cast all whom he had smitten was the great pit"—so LXX. reading **בור גדול** for which MT. gives again an incomprehensible reading **ביר גדליהו**. In one or two of these in-

stances we might be in doubt whether the LXX. deserves the preference; but they show at least that the translators did not simply guess, but if they made mistakes, the mistakes arose from the confusion of similar forms for which their Hebrew copy is to be held responsible. So when they in an unvocalized text confused רעים and רעים, נם and נם, שמה and שמה, we can hardly lay it to carelessness. Further examples of confusion of similar letters in their Hebrew copy are תגור for תגור (iv. 1), ילכו for ילכו (xii. 2), והושבתים for והשיבותים (xii. 15), ישמעו for ישובו (xii. 17), אמר for אמר (xv. 11), רעך for רעך (xxii. 22), חרב for חרון (xxv. 38), שם for כם (xli. 8, this and the preceding are probably right in the LXX.), כה for כה (ix. 15).

There is plenty of evidence therefore that the MS. from which the version was made has suffered in transmission. The influences which affected it are the same in kind as those we have discovered affecting the MT. Although the LXX. is so much shorter, it has in places suffered the same kind of inflation, as in xxi. 3, where it adds after Zedekiah βασιλέα Ιουδα, or xxi. 5, where it inserts πάντας, or xxiv. 1, where it adds a fourth class to the three carried captive according to the Hebrew, or xxxii. 28, where it inserts after Yahweh ὁ Θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ. In fact the same tendencies affected the LXX. after its translation; for a considerable group of MSS. (the same which Cornill supposes to represent Hesychius' recension) has in several instances + ὁ Θεός from which the other groups are free.

The principle that the more difficult reading is to be preferred, is often abused. There is a sense in which an ungrammatical expression is more difficult than a correct one. To take one more example from Jeremiah (xxv. 26); the reading of the MT. is ואת-כל-הממלכות הארץ אשר-על פני האדמה. Any tyro knows that הממלכות הארץ is ungrammatical. The LXX. omits הארץ and is therefore in a sense less difficult. But if we state the rule as it is stated by Westcott and Hort—that reading is original which will account for the existence of the other—we shall have a better guide. If the shorter reading is the original we can easily account for the longer as the work of an absent-minded scribe to whom the phrase כל ממלכות הארץ was familiar. But we cannot account for the longer reading as the work of Jeremiah at all. Such glaring instances are, of course, rare, but some of those quoted above are scarcely less convincing.

Adequate treatment of the text of Jeremiah would require a volume. The cases treated in this paper are, however, I think fair examples of the state of the text, and, if so, they justify the conclusion that the LXX. was made from a better text than the one preserved for us by the synagogue. The LXX. is therefore a source for the text of the very first importance. Both LXX. and MT., however, have suffered from the same tendencies, and by judicious criticism it is possible to construct from both a better text than that now shown by either one. This critical work is our need.

Two questions have not been referred to here. One concerns the original arrangement of the prophecies, the other concerns the longer sections not found in the LXX. The answer to these questions is not necessarily influenced by pronouncing in favor of the LXX. in general. It is entirely possible that a better MS. should suffer dislocation and mutilation from which another has escaped.